

September 2017

## **BASIN AND RANGE NATIONAL MONUMENT**

Resource Management Plan (RMP): Public scoping concluded in July 2016. The final scoping report and combined file of all scoping comments received are available at <http://bit.ly/29nU5BT>. The BLM is currently completing the analysis of the management situation (AMS) and developing alternatives for analysis in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The BLM expects to make a draft RMP/EIS available for public review and comment in winter 2017.

Conservation Easement: The BLM in December 2016 accepted the donation of a 1,316-acre conservation easement on private lands in Garden Valley containing artist Michael Heizer's earth art "*City*." The BLM received the easement from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). LACMA received it from the non-profit Triple Aught Foundation, which owns the land on which the sculpture is built. Under the agreement, Triple Aught retains fee title to the land. Under the terms of the Easement, the BLM has the discretionary authority to prevent development incompatible with protection of the artwork and surrounding area.

## **ELY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Nevada and Northeastern California Greater Sage-Grouse Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment (ARMPA) in September 2015 amended the Ely District Resource Management Plan (RMP) signed in 2008. Changes to the Ely RMP from the ARMPA, as well as two other amendments, have been incorporated into the RMP.

## **ENERGY**

### **Electrical Transmission Development –**

TransCanyon Cross-Tie Project: The BLM Ely District and West Desert (Utah) District, Fillmore Field Office are coordinating on the TransCanyon, LLC on an application to construct a 500kV transmission line between the Robinson Summit (500 kV) substation west of Ely and the Mona/Clover (345kV) substation near Mona, Utah. The proponent submitted an application and a preliminary plan of development. The Fillmore Field Office is leading the project.

TransWest Express Project: The Record of Decision for the TransWest Express Transmission Project was published in the Federal Register in December 2016. The 60-day appeal period closed Feb. 15, 2017. The 730-mile transmission line project will extend from Wyoming, through Colorado and Utah, to southern Nevada through the southeast corner of Lincoln County and deliver up to 3,000 megawatts of electric power generated by wind energy to major load centers, including Las Vegas and San Diego, Calif. The BLM Wyoming State Office is leading the project.

## Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Ely District Update

### Natural Gas-fired Energy Development -

Toquop Energy Project: The BLM has issued a Notice to Proceed to Toquop Energy, Inc., for a natural gas-fired power plant. Construction can start once the proponent satisfies conditions outlined in the Notice.

### Solar Energy Development -

Dry Lake Valley North Solar Energy Zone: The Ely District is scheduled in late July to conduct a pre-application meeting with APL Renewables, which has expressed interest in establishing a facility in the Dry Lake Valley North SEZ. The BLM in March 2016 issued the Final Regional Mitigation Strategy for the 25,069-acre Dry Lake Valley North Solar Energy Zone (SEZ) located in Lincoln County, Nev. The Dry Lake Valley North SEZ is the largest of the five SEZs in Nevada and, when fully built, could produce up to 4,000 MW of renewable energy. It is located about 15 miles west of Pioche and 15 miles northwest of Caliente. The SEZ is framed by the North Pahroc Range to the west, and the West Range, Bristol Range, Highland Range, Ely Springs Range, Black Canyon Range, and Burnt Springs Range to the east.

## **FIRE MANAGEMENT**

### Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation –

Hatchery Fire: The Ely District is proposing to treat 1,010 acres of the public lands that burned in the 1,105-acre Hatchery Fire near Baker, Nev. The July 2017 fire consumed Greater Sage grouse, mule deer and pronghorn antelope habitat. Planned-for treatments include ground and aerial seeding, weed treatments, and fence repair, as well as livestock closures and monitoring. The goal is to reduce the potential for future large-scale, fast-moving fires near Baker and to stabilize Greater Sage grouse General Habitat Management Areas, minimize invasion from cheatgrass and reduce soil loss from wind and water erosion.

Hobson Fire: The Ely District is proposing to treat public lands burned in the 338-acre Hobson Fire, about 10 miles east of the Bald Mountain Mine. The July 2017 fire consumed Greater Sage grouse, mule deer, elk and pronghorn antelope habitat. Planned-for treatments include ground seeding, weed treatments, and livestock closures and monitoring to stabilize Greater Sage grouse Priority Habitat Management Areas, minimize cheatgrass invasion and reduce soil loss from wind and water erosion.

The district will likely partner with NDOW on one or both of the ESR efforts.

### Fuels Reduction/Habitat Restoration –

Ward Mountain Restoration Project: The Ely District expects in fall 2017 to issue its Decision Record. The Forest Service has already issued its Decision. The federal agencies and Ely Shoshone Tribe are collaborating to restore vegetative health and improve wildlife habitat, and reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire on Ward Mountain, adjacent to Ely, Nev., through the use of manual and mechanical treatments and

## Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Ely District Update

prescribed fire. Approximately 42,670 acres of the 100,000-acre project area would be treated over a 10-year period.

Overland Pass Habitat Improvement Project: The BLM and Nevada Department of Wildlife in January 2017 aerially seeded a mix of grasses, forbs, shrubs and legumes on most of the 7,695 acres burned in 2016's Overland Fire, south of the Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge. The 900-acre chaining scheduled this spring was cancelled due to muddy conditions. Hand thinning and mastication of pinion-juniper is scheduled in fall 2017 on the Ruby Valley portion of the project area. The wildlife habitat improvement project is a collaborative effort between the BLM, NDOW and Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest. The agencies expect to treat about 18,500 acres of a 45,200-acre project area over a 10-year period.

Egan and Johnson Basins Restoration Project: The 30-day public comment period concluded on September 1. The BLM expects to issue a decision in mid-October 2017. The Egan and Johnson Basin Restoration Project would reduce catastrophic wildfire risk and improve Greater Sage-grouse habitat within the Egan and Johnson basins, about five miles west of Cherry Creek, Nev., by treating up to 24,375 acres in 21 treatment units. Proposed treatments would include manual and mechanical thinning of pinion-juniper, treatment of invasive plant species, such as cheatgrass, and use of prescribed fire. The BLM would also manually thin pinion-juniper in specified areas outside the treatment units, but within the total 84,675-acre project area. The Egan and Johnson Basin Restoration Project Preliminary Environmental Assessment is available at <http://bit.ly/1T9Yesn>.

Duck Creek Basin Fuels Reduction and Habitat Improvement Project: The BLM in spring 2018 will release for public review and comment a preliminary environmental assessment for a project that would improve Greater Sage-grouse habitat and create fuels breaks in the urban interface areas of Duck Creek Basin. The proposed project would complement already-completed work on the neighboring Forest Service and private lands.

Coombs Creek: The BLM in late winter 2017 will renew mastication of pinion-juniper and continue through the summer. The multi-year pinion-juniper tree-thinning project calls for treating between 4,500 to 7,000 acres of the public lands in south Butte Valley, about 20 miles northwest of Ely, to improve Greater Sage-Grouse habitat. The BLM, Great Basin Institute and Nevada Conservation Corps have so far hand-thinned or masticated about 1,450 acres. Acreage masticated to date has been seeded with assistance from the Nevada Department of Wildlife, which is providing Heritage Fund Program dollars for the project through the White Pine County Wildlife Advisory Board.

Patterson Pass Sage Grouse Habitat Improvement Project: The Ely District is collaborating with Utah State University, BLM Color Country (Utah) District and Nevada Department of Wildlife to monitor Greater Sage-grouse populations to determine the project's effectiveness.

## Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Ely District Update

Shingle Creek Aspen Restoration Project: Weather permitting, the BLM in winter 2017-2018 will burn slash piles of white fir. Removing the conifers promotes aspen regeneration and health. The project area is in the Snake Range near Great Basin National Park, about 40 miles southeast of Ely.

North Antelope Habitat Restoration Project: The BLM in fiscal year 2018 will masticate pinion-juniper on about 2000 acres of the 12,000-acre project area. The habitat improvement project at the north end of the Antelope Range, 70 miles northeast of Ely, is approximately 85-percent complete.

South Steptoe Valley Watershed Restoration Project: A contractor is masticating pinion-juniper on approximately 400 acres of the project area, and hand thinning will resume near Cattle Camp Wash in fall 2017.

Bald Mountain Restoration Project: The BLM awarded contracts to conduct treatments in the Bald Mountain Treatment Unit of the Newark and Huntington Watershed Restoration Plan. Work began this summer. The hand-thinning portion of the project is complete and the mechanical portion of the project will be finished by the end of September. The Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act-funded project will treat approximately 1,600 acres of the public lands to benefit wildlife, as well as restore about 25 acres of aspen.

Newark and Huntington Watershed Restoration Project: The sage-grouse habitat improvement project is in the planning phase. The BLM is currently mapping treatment areas in the southern portion of Newark Valley. Plans call for hand thinning of pinion-juniper on about 3,000 acres of the public lands near the southern part of the Pancake Range in fall/winter 2017 with additional mastication treatments scheduled in 2017-2018.

## LANDS & REALTY

Public Land Sales: The Ely District, Caliente Field Office is reviewing comments received on a proposal to offer through competitive sale 14 parcels totaling approximately 427 acres of public lands in Lincoln County, Nevada. The 30-day public review and comment period concluded on March 27, 2017. All of the parcels are located within five miles of the following communities; Alamo, Caliente, Panaca and Pioche. The proposed sale would be conducted in accordance with the Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2004. For more information, go to <http://bit.ly/2lDT6RB>.

The Ely District, Bristlecone Field Office is processing a Round 2 land sale in White Pine County, in accordance with the White Pine County Conservation, Recreation and Development Act of 2006. There are three parcels. Parcel one is 111 acres located adjacent to the Ely KOA; parcel two is 80 acres located alongside Lackawanna Road, about five miles north of Ely; and parcel three is 240 acres located west of and adjacent to U.S. Highway 93, about five miles north of Ely.

## Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Ely District Update

Land Conveyances: The Ely District has conveyed public lands in Lincoln County to the Nevada Division of Lands to expand the Cathedral Gorge and Kershaw-Ryan state parks. The BLM is processing a conveyance for Beaver Dam State Park. The district has also conveyed BLM-administered lands to expand the Ward Charcoal Kilns State Park in White Pine County and is processing conveyances for the Steptoe Wildlife Management Area and White Pine Industrial Park.

### Rights-of-Ways in progress:

- Beehive Telco upgrade of eight miles of buried cable
- Lincoln Co. Tel. System – renew buried phone line (Pioche to Cathedral Gorge State Park)
- SNWA – renew Evapotranspiration sites
- New Cingular Wireless PCS – reissue communication site leases at Highland and Alamo
- UNLV – renew two climate change monitoring stations
- USAF – renew 5 ISIT test equipment sites

Desert Land Entries (DLE): The Ely District has completed the Kathy Smith DLE. The Decision Record was signed on February 23 and the Entry Allowed Decision sent on Feb. 27, 2017.

## MINERALS

### Active Mining Plans –

Robinson Mine Plan Amendment: The Ely District, Bristlecone Field Office signed the Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact in December 2016 and approved the reclamation cost estimate in February 2017.

Bald Mountain Mine (BMM): The Ely District, Bristlecone Field Office is reviewing a proponent-proposed modification to the North Operations Plan, submitted to the BLM in October 2016. The field office issued the Record of Decision for the Barrick Gold U.S., Inc. project in August 2016. The decision allows the mining operator to expand existing gold mine facilities and construct and operate new facilities at Barrick's BMM North and South Operations Area projects.

Gold Rock Mine Project: The BLM expects to make the Gold Rock Mine Project Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) available to the public in January 2018. The proposed project would be located in western White Pine County, in the same geographic area as the reclaimed and closed Easy Junior Mine. The project area consists of a total of 18,745 acres of BLM-administered lands with the majority of the mine facilities located within a fenced mine area totaling 8,757 acres. A total of 3,946 acres of disturbance would be authorized. The majority of the area would be reclaimed. The action alternatives were developed to help reduce project-related impacts to greater sage grouse and mule deer. The projected mining period is 10 years, with associated construction, closure, reclamation and post-closure monitoring periods extending the project life to approximately 48 years. GRP Inc. estimates that the project would create between 150-250 jobs.

## Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Ely District Update

Pan Mine: GRP Minerals has assumed ownership of the Pan Mine, formerly owned by Midway Gold. A new reclamation bond has been obligated and the operator is conducting exploratory drilling.

### Mineral Materials –

The Caliente Field Office has resumed selling mineral material out of the Panaca Community Pit adjacent to State Route 319, about one mile east of Panaca, Nev. The BLM has also expanded the pit an additional five acres. The field office will make the additional material available once material in the current pit is exhausted. The BLM imposed a moratorium on sales in 2015 when it recognized the pit was located inside a parcel of land eligible for disposal under the Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2004 (LCCRDA) and the Ely Resource Management Plan, signed in 2008. The field office based the June 15 decision to resume sales on a review of LCCRDA, requests made by Lincoln County, its historic use and key support role for the community.

### Oil & Gas –

December Oil & Gas Lease Sale: The public comment period concluded September 18. The BLM Ely District asked the public to review and provide comment on 208 parcels of public land nominated for potential oil and gas exploration and development. The parcels, totaling 388, 960 acres were analyzed in a preliminary environmental assessment that is available online at <http://bit.ly/2vH21Ix>. A Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sale is scheduled on December 12, 2017. Additional information about the sale including the sale notice and parcel list will be posted to <https://on.doi.gov/2nntQCJ> as it becomes available.

The Ely District in August 2017 completed the biological assessment (BA) that begins reinitiation of consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) on the Ely Resource Management Plan (RMP).

The FWS expressed concern for impacts to listed fish from oil and gas exploration and development in parcels listed in the December 2016 Lease Sale. The FWS asked that all of the parcels be deferred based on the inadequacy of the biological opinion. The BLM Nevada State Director approved the request to defer the parcels and the December sale was postponed to December 2017.

Reinitiation of Consultation is expected to take up to 135 days from the date the BA is accepted by the FWS. This may affect the timing and the list of parcels available for the December 2017 lease sale.

Other: The Ely District is reviewing comments received during a 30-day public review and comment period for the Black Point East #1 Preliminary Environmental Assessment that concluded in March 2017. The Envy Energy-proposed exploration and development well would be located at the northern end of Railroad Valley, in White Pine County, Nev.

## Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Ely District Update

Following consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Ely District, Bristlecone Field Office in February 2017 signed a Sundry Notice allowing Bright Sky Energy and Minerals to perform hydraulic fracturing on a previously drilled exploration well in White River Valley.

### **NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES**

Bahsahwahbee Traditional Cultural Property: The Ely District in June 2017 met with the Confederate Tribes of the Goshute and Duckwater Tribal Council to inform them that the Bahsahwahbee Traditional Cultural Property (Swamp Cedars Area of Critical Environmental Concern) approved in January 2017 has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Bahsahwahbee TCP, located alongside U.S. Highway 50 in north Spring Valley, has local, statewide, and national significance based on its unique religious, social, spiritual, ethnic, historic, and ecological characteristics.

Nevada Native National Land Act: Signed in October 2016 by President Obama, the Nevada Native Nations Lands Act transfers about 71,000 acres of land under federal control to six Great Basin Indian Tribes, including the Duckwater Shoshone Tribe that is receiving 31,269 acres of BLM Ely District-administered lands. The tribes plan to use the land to address housing, economic development and other needs in their communities.

The Ely District and Tribe met in March 2017 to discuss their grazing permit. District resource management specialists are reaching out to other effected permittees and verbally informing them of the expansion. The district is researching minerals permits to determine the effected holders. Research into effected Rights-of-Ways is complete and letters notifying the holders mailed.

Snake Creek Indian Burial Cave: The Ely District anticipates that the re-patriated remains will be re-interred in the Snake Creek Indian Burial Cave in fall 2017. The BLM Nevada State Director in February 2017 signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ely Shoshone Tribe as the lead for the three local tribes. They are the Ely Shoshone Tribe of Nevada, Duckwater Shoshone Tribe of Nevada, and the Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation of Utah and Nevada.

### **NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY**

National Public Lands Day 2017 is scheduled Saturday, Sept. 30. This year's event will take place directly south of Lund, Nev., and involves cleaning up an illegal dumpsite south of town. The cleanup is Troop 66 Life Scout Skyler Carter's Eagle Scout Service Project to help him earn his Eagle Scout Award. Signs will lead to the project location. Event hours are 8am to 1pm, followed by a barbeque at the old Lund schoolhouse beginning at 1:30pm. Work clothes are advised. Gloves and a NPLD t-shirt will be provided. Call the BLM at (775) 289-1800 to learn more or volunteer.

### **RANGELAND MANAGEMENT**

Rangeland Monitoring/Term Permit Renewals: Grazing allotments scheduled for monitoring in 2017 are Chin Creek, North Steptoe, North Steptoe Trail, Becky Creek,

## Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Ely District Update

Lovell Peak, Whiteman Creek, Second Creek, Becky Springs, Sampson Creek, Tippet Pass, Cave Valley Ranch, Sacramento Pass, Stephens Creek, Connors Summit, Willow Springs, and Geyser Ranch. The District in 2017/2018 will begin the rangeland health evaluation and complete the standards determination document for each of the allotments. Monitoring is conducted in coordination with livestock permittees and in accordance with the Sage grouse Habitat Assessment Framework and the Nevada and Northeastern California Greater Sage-grouse Approved RMP Amendment. Monitoring priorities include sage grouse priority habitat management areas, wild horse herd management areas and riparian areas.

### RECREATION & TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Ash Springs Recreation Site: The Ely District, Caliente Field Office expects in 2018 to release for public comment a preliminary environmental assessment for a plan to manage the Ash Springs Recreation Site, located alongside U.S. Highway 93 about 100 miles north of Las Vegas. The plan would provide management direction for the BLM-administered portion of Ash Springs, addressing visitor usage and public safety, endangered and sensitive species habitat, and water quality issues in compliance with existing local ordinances, state and federal laws. The site is temporarily closed to the public. The closure was published in the *Federal Register* in April 2016.

BLM Analyzing Potential Additional Lincoln County Trails: The Ely District, Caliente Field Office is reviewing comments received during the 30-day public input period that concluded in February 2017. The BLM is analyzing expanding motorized and non-motorized recreational opportunities in Lincoln County. Funding is provided through Round 16 of the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act.

Lincoln County Partners Multi-Purpose Non-Motorized Trail System: Trail construction will resume in October 2017. When completed, the system will enhance access to public lands by constructing new multi-purpose hiking and mountain biking trails on public lands around Caliente, in Lincoln County. Funding is provided through Round 15 of the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act.

Ely District Cave Management Plan: The Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Final Ely District Cave and Karst Plan & Environmental Assessment was signed in April 2016. The Plan establishes direction for the long-term management, planning, and oversight of the Ely District's cave resources, e.g., biological, cultural, geological and hydrological. It also identifies specific management actions for recreational use, scientific research, and management of cave resources.

### SPECIAL LEGISLATION

Lincoln County Archaeological Initiative (LCAI) –

Round 11 Nominations: The BLM Ely District is asking the public to submit suggestions for priorities not yet considered for Round 11. Suggestions should include sufficient information to identify the type of archaeological resource and/or type of preservation



## Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Ely District Update

activity(s) needed. The BLM will accept comments through **Monday, Oct. 2, 2017**. Already established priorities are:

- Developing Science-Based Methods: The Use of Innovative Technology and Techniques in the Preservation and Interpretation of Archaeological Resources
- The Development and Implementation of Public Outreach and Educational Programs for Archaeological Resources within Lincoln County, Nevada
- Development and application of Archaeological Contexts
- Archaeological Identification and Evaluation Research

Address written comments to the BLM Ely District Office, 702 North Industrial Way, Ely, NV 89301, Attn: Carol Bass or fax them to (775) 289-1910. Submit comments electronically to [cbass@blm.gov](mailto:cbass@blm.gov). *Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.*

For more information, contact Carol Bass, BLM Ely District special legislation program manager, at (775) 289-1800 or [cbass@blm.gov](mailto:cbass@blm.gov)

Round 10 Nominations: The nomination period for project proposals closed March 17, 2017. Proposals under the initiative focus on the inventory, evaluation, protection and management of unique archaeological resources in Lincoln County. Projects must be on public land within Lincoln County and address the priorities outlined in the solicitation. Proposals are being solicited through [grants.gov](http://grants.gov), solicitation #L17AS00010, or through [fedconnect.net](http://fedconnect.net), solicitation #L17PS00104. Funding for LCAI comes from revenues generated through the sale of public lands identified for disposal in the Lincoln County Lands Act and existing land-use plans.

The Archaeological Resources Team reviewed the nominations in May 2017. The Nevada State Director received a recommendation for funding in August 2017.

Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) –

Round 17 Nominations: The nomination period for project proposals closed **May 5, 2017**.

Ely District Round 16 Funded Conservation Projects:

- Atlanta Road Sage-Grouse Habitat Improvement Continuation Project: The Ely District is proposing to conduct vegetation restoration on approximately 2,000 to 2,500 acres within the Lake Valley Watershed to improve habitat for the Greater Sage grouse by reducing conifer expansion within the Southern Great Basin Priority Area for Conservation (PAC). The treatments would expand Greater Sage-grouse Priority Habitat into adjacent General Habitat, expand General Habitat into adjacent

## Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Ely District Update

transitional habitat, and restore and enhance sagebrush ecological communities. The proposed project area is located within Lake Valley in northeastern Lincoln County.

- South Spring Valley and Hamblin Valley Watershed Restoration Plan: The BLM Ely District is proposing to complete the South Spring Valley and Hamblin Valley Watershed Restoration Plan Environmental Assessment that would outline management objectives and actions to restore vegetative communities where they have departed from historic reference conditions, and to improve vegetation community resistance and resilience to disturbance or drought. Most actions would focus on reducing fuels to prevent large-scale wildfires, improving soil stability and vegetative communities including habitat for Greater sage grouse.
- The district also received funding for a non-motorized multipurpose trail system in Lincoln County. (*See Recreation & Travel Management Planning, page 6*)

### WATERSHED ANALYSIS

The Ely District continues to develop and implement watershed-level planning to identify high priority habitat improvement projects for Greater Sage-Grouse and other wildlife species, hazardous fuels reduction projects, and other actions needed to improve public land health. The district has completed the watershed analysis process for 27 of 61 priority watersheds. Implementation plans have been completed for nine watersheds. The district is currently conducting watershed planning for Long Valley / Ruby Marshes and Butte Valley.

### WILD HORSES

Prison-trained Wild Horse Demonstration and Possible Adoption: The Northern Nevada Correctional Center-Silver State Industries and BLM saddle-trained wild horse and cart-trained burro adoption was held Saturday, Aug. 19. Three former wild horses and one burro were adopted for a total of \$3,000.

Water Canyon Wild Horse Growth Suppression Pilot Program: The Ely District and Volunteer Project Coordinator Jeanne Nations continue to monitor wild horses in the Water Canyon area of the Antelope Herd Management Area, 60 miles north of Ely, as part of the Water Canyon Wild Horse Growth Suppression Pilot Program. The 10-year program will provide the BLM the opportunity to determine the effectiveness of GonaCon-Equine on a small group of wild horses in a controlled environment with the possibility of expanded usage in future years, depending on the results.

The district in 2016 gathered approximately 65 wild horses from Water Canyon, using hay and water. The district released 25-30 horses back into the project area. Mares selected for release were treated with the fertility-control vaccine. Treated mares will be given a booster every 20-24 months to maintain the vaccine's effectiveness. When the population exceeds 40 animals, approximately 5-10 primarily young horses born within the project area, will be offered to the public through a trap-site adoption.

## Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Ely District Update

Wild Horse Gathers: The 30-day public comment period for the Preliminary Silver King Herd Management Area (HMA) Environmental Assessment (EA) concluded in August 2017. The preliminary EA analyzes the need to gather and remove excess wild horses from in and outside the 606,000-acre Silver King HMA in Lincoln County, about 90 miles south of Ely, Nev. Appropriate Management Level for the HMA is 60-128 wild horses. The estimated population is 850 wild horses. Under the proposed plan, the BLM could conduct an initial gather as early as late summer/early fall 2017 followed by maintenance gathers to be conducted over a 10-year period. Mares released back into the HMA would receive fertility control treatments (either PZP or GonaCon). The preliminary EA is available online at <http://bit.ly/2ubBSRZ>.

The Ely District is coordinating with the BLM Elko District on an environmental assessment that would provide for the gather and removal of excess wild horses from the Antelope and Triple B Complexes.

Flight Inventories: Flight inventories have been completed for the Moriah Herd Area, and Antelope, Eagle and Silver King Herd Management Areas (HMAs) in Nevada, and Chokecherry and Mt. Elinor HMAs in Utah. The BLM is awaiting the final numbers from the statistician.

### WILDERNESS

Lands with Wilderness Characteristics: The BLM is performing project by project inventory updates for Lands with Wilderness Character. A Lands with Wilderness Character inventory was completed for the Basin and Range National Monument.

###

*This report was last updated on **Sept. 8, 2017**. Contact Chris Hanefeld, BLM Ely District public affairs specialist, at (775) 289-1842 or [chanefel@blm.gov](mailto:chanefel@blm.gov) for more information on these and other projects/programs in the District.*